

Silliman or Phillips House
North East, Pennsylvania

HABS No. Pa. 512

HABS

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25. Nov. 19

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District No. 5-Pennsylvania

Historic American Buildings Survey
Karl E. Morrison, District Officer
319 Marine Bank Building, Erie, Pennsylvania

SILLIMAN HOUSE
North East, Erie County, Pennsylvania

Owner.

Meryl D. Phillips.

Date of Erection

1818.

Architect

Unknown.

Builder

Unknown.

Present Condition

Good.

Number of Stories:

Two, also basement and attic.

Materials of Construction:

Hand-made sand mould pressed brick, native woods.

Other Existing Records:

Local histories, Court House records.

Additional Data-Bibliography:

History of Erie County, Pennsylvania; Warner Beers and Co. 1884.

A Twentieth Century history of Erie County, Pennsylvania-Chicago-1909. The Lewis Publishing Co.-John Miller, historian.

History of Erie County, Pennsylvania, 2 Vols. Historical Publishing Company 1925. Topeka--Indianapolis, by J. E. Reed (John Elmer).

History of Erie County, Pennsylvania. Philadelphia, Lippincott Co. 1861 by L. G. Sanford (Laura G.). Published by author and copyrighted by her in 1894.

Nelson's biographical dictionary and historical reference book of Erie County, Pennsylvania, Erie, 1896. Two-thirds of this book by Benjamin Whitman. From the press of Wilson, Humphryes and Co. Fourth St., Logansport, Indiana.

Court House records.

SILLIMAN HOUSE
North East, Erie County, Pennsylvania

The very first record that appears in regard to this house is that it was the first brick house in the county outside of Erie, Pennsylvania. In 1818 when this house was built the houses in Erie County were usually constructed of logs, either round or hewed, so that the fact that this house was made brick caused quite an impression on the community, so much so that the historian of that day, Miss Sanford, noted the fact when she came to write a history of the county.

It was built about a mile east of the borough of North East and is still in splendid livable condition. It sets up on quite an eminence facing the highway on the south of it. It is a two story, attic and basement house and the original dwelling contained four rooms, two on each side of a central hall. An addition had been made to the rear of the house and some changes in the interior for modern living. The bricks used in the older portion are hand-made, sand mould pressed bricks, made on the premises. There is a tradition that the contractor was to be paid according to the number of bricks used, and it is said that he lived strictly up to his contract and used all the bricks he possibly could in the construction of this home.

James Silliman, who was the owner, came to Erie County in 1802 from Northumberland County, Pennsylvania and built this brick house acquiring the fine farm which has been in possession of the family more than a hundred years. James Silliman and his wife Jane Hunter moved to Erie County when Thomas, their son was but two months old. He erected first, a rude log house, near where now stands the brick house. They had seven children. Thomas, one of the sons was prominent in local politics and spent his life in the homestead. He married Jane Schultz and they were the parents of three children; Henry L., Frank, and Fred.

From Court records: between Henry L. and Frank L. Silliman, recorded April 16, 1892, Erie County Court House, "This indenture made 18th day of March 1892 between Frank L. Silliman and Alice his wife---The intention of this deed of even date herewith from Henry L. Silliman and wife to said Frank L. Silliman is to carry out an agreement of partition between the said parties of the real estate of their father the said Thomas Silliman, deceased, by which the said Frank L. Silliman is to have the west half of the main farm with the addition of a one rod wide strip and the east half of the "back lot" and by which the said Henry L. Silliman is to have the east half of the said farm less the one rod wide strip and the west half of the "back lot", in the presence of F. J. Smedley, R. S. Pierce, B. C. Town, Justice of the Peace.

Henry L. Silliman was one of the progressive farmers of North East Township and resided in the house where he was born July 10, 1849, and from which he married Miss Belle Bort, by whom he had three sons.

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SILLIMAN HOUSE

April 28, 1914 Meryl D. Phillip came into possession of the farm and homestead by purchase from the W. O. Wing estate, and now resides there.

Annie S. Baxter

Approved

Karl Emerson Dist. Off.
Sept 29, 1936.

Rec. Oct. 8. 36 TTW.